Calling the Middle Man

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by CaffeinatedFlumadiddle

Summary

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"So let me get this straight," he said slowly "A goddess came from the sky...Told you that you had a destiny to, um, help this Emrys-"

"Actually," Lancelot cleared his throat "She requested I serve as an ambassador between Emrys and Arthur."

Merlin stared.

"Right..." He frowned "So, uh, she told you to do that and...Gave you a chicken to close the veil between worlds?"

Percival looked at the pile of feathers with a grimace as he nudged them away with the toe of his boots.

"Yeah, that about covers it." Lancelot said and shrugged "My lord, does this mean you're going to kill me?" He asked, turning to Arthur. "Because I'm pretty sure this this crystal ball has magic in it."

Arthur wished he would have thrown himself in that damned veil when he had the chance.

Or

Instead of sacrificing himself to the veil, a goddess of the Old Religion decides to use Lancelot for the greater good of the prophecy. Lancelot...Decides to take a different route.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Death was more cumbersome than Arthur anticipated.

Like, obviously he expected death to be painful. At least for a little bit. It was something he tried not to think about as he marched towards the veil with every intent to sacrifice himself. He tried to think about it even less after Merlin was hit by the dorocha.

Of course, it was bold of him to assume Merlin could die. He wasn't even sure why he was surprised when the man popped back up with Lancelot a day later. Arthur had a theory that Merlin actually should have died years ago but survived off of pure defiance alone. It wouldn't surprise him. If Merlin defied nature's orders as well he defied Arthur's then he may very well be immortal.

At any rate, Arthur was confused when he had to pry his eyes open only to be met with cold stone beneath him and the ground trembling slightly. What was even more confusing was that most of his men were also unconscious beside him...Had they all died? He knew any of them would willingly sacrifice themselves for Camelot but he dearly hoped they all hadn't actually volunteered at once. Groaning, he rolled over, forcing himself up to notice the Cailleach was gone. So was the veil.

Fear jolted through him. Where was Merlin? He jerked up to find him eerily close to where the veil had been, but he too was passed out with his chest rising and falling slowly. Arthur frowned what the actual -

"Do you understand what is being asked of you?"

Oh, great. He should have just accepted the lack of action and maybe gone back to sleep. Instead he had an eerie woman's voice thundering over the ruins. Wait - where was Lancelot? He had assumed since he saw Merlin that his other knight would be only a few feet away, but Arthur wasn't able to locate him. He spun around towards the voice just in time to see a woman dressed head to toe in gold hand something to Lancelot.

No. No, actually. She wasn't dressed head to toe in gold. That was inaccurate. She was gold. Her skin, her eyes, her hair - all of it was varying shades that was blinding and shimmering even in the depths of the night. Lancelot, for his part, kind of looked like someone had punched him repeatedly before being thrown into a fight with a rather hungry Gwaine (speaking from personal experience there. That was a long story).

"I...I do, my lady." He said slowly and looked down at whatever she had handed him "But why...Why have you...?" He stared, blinking slowly as he tried to find the question. The gold woman only smiled.

"Your sacrifice was noble, Sir Lancelot," she said and placed a hand on his arm "But this kingdom will still need you...And more importantly, Emrys and Arthur cannot continue as is. You are their only hope."

There was a pause.

"...I'm not sure Emrys will appreciate that." Lancelot finally said. The golden woman smiled.

"Perhaps not, but there is a need nevertheless. As he has been created for his purpose, you have been created for yours."

Lancelot bit his lip.

"Of course, but...Could you wait for him to wake up and explain? I'm just a little worried that -"

"Lancelot?" Arthur interrupted, unable to keep his confusion at bay any longer. There was really only so long you could sit back and watch your knight talk to a gold woman about yourself and some random guy called Emrys.

Both turned to look at him. Goldilocks didn't seem surprised. Lancelot looked like he might burst into tears at any moment - which was saying something because the man was pretty calm and collected at all times.

"Arthur Pendragon." The woman greeted "The veil has been closed. Congratulations."

Arthur didn't feel like he did much but alright.

"Thank you, Lady...?"

"Arvutania."

"Bless you."

"That is my name, young king." She said, skin burning a bit brighter as she spoke. Arthur flushed. Ah. Right. From behind him he heard a small groan and turned to see Merlin shifting a bit. An - uh, Arv - actually, he was going to keep calling her Goldilocks. Goldilocks peered over and gave a long sigh. "I should take my leave. I wish you the best of luck, Sir Lancelot. And to you, young king."

Arthur wanted to point out he was still a prince but figured that wasn't really important at the moment. He was still trying to figure out if he should be running this woman through. Being made of pure gold seemed pretty magical to him...but also Lancelot wasn't trying to kill her so he'd wait and see.

Before he could decide what to do there was a bright burst of light and she was gone.

"GET LOST YOU HOLD HAG!" Gwaine yelled, jolting up suddenly before looking around. "...what happened? Where is the veil and the woman with the croaky voice?" He asked with a

frown. From beside him, Leon grabbed onto his arm to promptly throw up.

"My head..." He moaned as Gwaine patted his back in sympathy. "What happened? Arthur?" He asked with a note of alarm as his eyes danced around the ruins only to find the prince a few feet away. He gave a small sigh of relief.

"What the Hell is this?" Elyan's voice asked and Arthur turned to see him staring at a rather alarming pile of blood and feathers. "Was this here before?" He frowned and pulled Percival over to show him. "It looks fresh."

"Yeah," Lancelot spoke up from where he was standing with his hands full of whatever Goldilocks had given him. "I killed a chicken."

Everyone turned to him.

"I did it humanly!" He added. Gwaine got up to stare down at the pile on the ground.

"...clearly." He said and looked around "What happened? Where's the tear?" He asked and looked around, mouthing numbers as he attempted to count them all off "We're alive and - ah, Merlin. Here." He frowned as Merlin stumbled to the group looking more baffled than any of them. Lancelot looked at the ground, eyes fixed on his feet as everyone turned to him.

"I had planned to sacrifice myself to seal the tear." Lancelot finally said. Merlin gave a sharp intake, eyes widening as he clenched his fists by his sides. "I could not let any of you die. Not my prince nor...my friends." He said, though his eyes seemed to fix onto Merlin when he said the last part. "When I was faced with my decision a...woman appeared." He said slowly. Arthur rose an eyebrow. A woman. Sure. That was the word they were going to use to describe Goldilocks. "She, uh, pointed out that the Cailleach wanted a blood sacrifice but did not point out what kind of blood...so she gave me a chicken. I killed it and the tear was sealed." He explained. Elyan frowned.

"This woman appeared to help you? Why? Was she a witch?" He asked, hand moving towards his sword. Arthur nodded in agreement. She had seemed rather...Witch-like though he was pretty sure the sorceresses he had come across before had all been pale rather than gold.

"She claimed she was a goddess of the Old Religion. She said she had a job for me." He said after taking a long breath. Arthur rose his brows.

"A goddess of the...Old Religion?" He asked and frowned, "You mean a false god."

"An outlawed one." Merlin said sharply. Arthur rolled his eyes. Everyone knew sorcerers lied about their so called 'gods'. Only fools believed in that sort of thing. And, well, Merlin was a fool so that checked out. Lancelot grimaced.

"She looked pretty real to me, sire."

...okay. Even Arthur couldn't argue that. He would try his damned best though.

"A sorceress in disguise." He said stubbornly "I saw her. Golden Girl."

"Arvutania?" Merlin gaped. Arthur turned to him. How did he know these things? "I read about her once. By accident." He added hastily. "....I also accidentally read that she was the goddess of prophecy." He said, making a face of clear distaste. "I bet she was a fun ball of riddles to talk to."

"Actually, she was pretty clear with me." Lancelot shrugged. Merlin threw up his hands. Arthur ignored him and whatever hissy fit he was throwing. "She said she wanted me to be an ambassador."

"An ambassador?" Arthur repeated and crossed his arms “What are you talking about?” He asked. “An ambassador for what?”

“Ah, well.” Lancelot said and straightened himself up “Between you and…The magical world.”

“Between what?” Merlin choked. For once, Arthur was inclined to agree.

“I have no interest in such a thing.” He said dryly “To have an ambassador would mean I have an interest in associating myself with magic. I do not.” He said. Lancelot’s face went a little blank at that, but didn’t object. He only mulled over the words for a second before sighing.

“Well…She said there’s this Emrys…Person,” He began and Merlin stiffened. Probably another name he read in his book of fairytales “He is Camelot’s protector…But he can’t tell anyone who he is so I need to be there to, uh, mitigate. “It’s why she stopped me from going through the veil. She thinks you’ll trust me and that Emrys will trust me.”

“And I still am not inclined to negotiate with magic.”

“Of course, my lord… But, with all due respect… I’m not really sure she plans on taking that into consideration.”

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A few days later, the incident was almost completely forgotten. After all, Lancelot was still Lancelot. Arthur didn't have to worry that he would start to consort with magic just because a bloody woman made of gold told him to.

Don't get him wrong, he was grateful that Lancelot was still alive and well - that they all were - but that didn't mean he had to bend to this insane request of…What exactly? Playing nice with magic? He would do no such thing.

Luckily, nobody brought it up again…Though he did hear a rather strange conversation when they were heading back to Camelot.

"…A bloody insult! Do they not think I can do my job? What the Hell? If she could talk to you she very well could have come over and given me a few pointers!" Merlin hissed before a long pause followed "Not that I'm not happy for you. I mean, I don't really know how you feel about it, but if someone were to do something like this I'm happy its you-"

"I don't think it's necessarily about you doing a bad job, Merlin." Lancelot's voice soothed "It's just you can't always… Be direct in your approach. This way, I can. Besides, I'm excited to see more of your world." He whispered back. Arthur sighed. It would appear Lancelot had agreed to carry out some extra servant duties for the week. He always did nonsense like that. Arthur knew he was fond of Merlin, but it was still ridiculous. One would think that after being recruited by an evil sorceress he would stop volunteering to do anything other than what his knighthood required of him.

"Direct." Merlin scoffed "Nothing about my bloody life has ever been direct."

Merlin and him might have shared that sentiment because it wasn't long afterwards that he was faced with his first of many 'Lance Lessons' (a term later coined by a very irritated Merlin after a few cups of wine).

"So," the knight said during a feast "I need to talk to you about magic."

"Is this about the woman you met at the veil?" Arthur sighed, "Nothing will come of this request, Lancelot. I'm not -"

"I met Emrys, my lord." Lancelot cut in. He hadn't touched his food yet. Probably waiting for Arthur to start eating like respectful knights did, he thought as he looked over at where Gwaine was digging into his meal. Tragically, that wasn't the most upsetting thing on his mind anymore.

"You met Emrys?"

"Yes. He is going to explain to me stuff about magic and I relay it to you." Lancelot nodded. Arthur closed his eyes.

"No."

"But, my lord!" Lancelot frowned "I promised the goddess-"

"Lancelot," Arthur groaned "Please, spare me your promises. You made an oath to me, remember?" He asked, hoping that would be the end of it...Which was foolish because nothing Arthur ever hoped for came true. Merlin could attest to that. He had been hoping for years that the man would bring him his breakfast on time to no prevail.

"I am of course loyal to you and want what is best for this kingdom," Lancelot said, immediately jutting out his chin "But what sort of knight would I be if I went around not honoring my word? Goddess or not, she is the reason we all survived the veil. I am not advocating for use of magic. Only for you to listen as I have promised to try and convince you to do. I owe her that much."

Don't fall for it, Arthur. There's such a thing as being too noble, he told himself firmly and leveled a glare. Lancelot merely looked at him and Arthur hated the expectant gleam in his eyes. Like he knew Arthur would side with him because it was very obviously the right thing to do. Like saying no would destroy Lancelot's heart because he expected so much better and - damnit. Him and Merlin both. They both bloody expected him to be far more forgiving than he actually was.

"What exactly would you be telling me?" He sighed. He supposed hearing about magic wasn't quite off the table. After all, knowing your enemy had it's advantages. Perhaps he could get a better understanding of this Emrys and his golden companion. Lancelot brightened.

"Well, there's a prophecy, apparently, but I can't get into all of that. Emrys is part of it though. So are you. It's my job to keep you two communicating."

"A prophecy," Arthur repeated dryly "How exciting. And who is this Emrys? I haven't heard of him before."

"Oh, he works in secret. Not many people know who he is - though it is said he is a powerful sorcerer...Maybe the most powerful of his kind."

"Fantastic. Could you kill him for me?"

Lancelot looked at him. Worth a shot, really.

"I don't think he's dangerous," the knight finally said "Though I will keep an eye out for any suspicious behavior." He promised. Arthur took a long sip of wine. At least there was that.

"And if he's so bloody nice and powerful why doesn't he keep his kin from attacking my kingdom?" He asked as Merlin came over to refill his glass.

"You mean your kin." He muttered and Arthur fixed him with a disbelieving glare. "Morgana may be a sorceress but she is of your blood." He pointed out and put the jug of wine down. "Should I just get Anthony to take me to the dungeons?" He asked, gesturing to guard in the doorway. Arthur nodded. "Alright - ANTHONY! I'm going back in!"

"Merlin, you just got out this morning," the guard sighed, yanking a key off of his belt "Would it kill you to behave?"

Lancelot snorted as he finally started eating, taking a bite of his fish before speaking again.

"Well, I believe he has stopped several attacks. Many of which we were unaware of. Though, he could be lying I suppose." He mused and Arthur nodded in agreement. "Though the prophecy says-"

"What the bloody Hell even is this prophecy?" Arthur interrupted. Lancelot paused.

"I know someone who can actually explain that to you."

"You've organized a meeting...With a dragon?" Arthur asked and shook his head. This was getting out of hand already. No freaking way was he meeting with a dragon. Dragons eat people. They definitely didn't talk.

Lancelot at least seemed to acknowledge this was a bad idea because his shoulders sagged a bit as grabbed his last piece of armor to put into place, fixing Arthur with an almost pleading look.

"I know," he said warily "Emrys introduced us and I think it would be beneficial for you to meet him as well-"

"And by 'him' you mean the dragon?" Arthur asked, wrinkling his nose "Lancelot, the last time I saw a dragon it burned down half of Camelot and killed hundreds of innocent people." He said. Lancelot gave a noise that was a cross between a weak laugh and whine of pain.

"Funny you should mention that...This is the same dragon."

You had got to be fucking kidding.

"That dragon is dead." Arthur said flatly "I killed him myself."

Lancelot closed his eyes for a moment, taking a long breath before straightening up so he could look Arthur dead in the eyes.

"My lord...You are, of course, a fine fighter. The best Camelot has to offer," he began. Oh boy. This wasn't going to go where Arthur would like it "But...The dragon is still very much alive. Emrys used his dragonlord powers and banished him from Camelot. It is also why I am confident the dragon will not harm us now... Though you can bring defenses if you see fit. Also, it would be a meeting outside Camelot."

Oh, so now this Emrys guy was a dragonlord? Ridiculous. Arthur tried to digest this all as it came, but really...What was he supposed to think?

"And...What if I refuse?" He asked. Lancelot looked at him with slightly narrowed eyes before puffing out his chest.

"Then I suppose I have failed my destiny... Perhaps the goddess will come back and accept my sacrifice as I have not fulfilled my end of the deal."

That little... it was a low blow and he bloody knew it. Where the Hell was that noble attitude his knight was so renowned for? Noble knights didn't guilt trip their kings into meeting with dragons. Arthur scowled. He wouldn't give in.

...Except yeah. He did.

That's how he found out bloody dragons and fucking talk. Who knew? Not him.

"I must say," the beast began, voice somehow young and old at once as he lifted his head up to peer at the massive army Arthur was leading through the trees "I was not expecting to actually meet-"

"YOU!" Lancelot shouted and marched past the army, past Arthur, past the rest of the knights and right freaking up to the death reptile to point a comically small finger at him "Oh, I have some things to say to you!" He growled and gestured wildly "You can't just take an innocent kid and tell him the world is on his shoulders then do fuck all!"

The dragon... Did not seem to expect this. In all fairness, neither did Arthur.

"I had wondered what the gods had planned for you, young knight. I do not think this is what they inten-"

"Furthermore, you give bad fucking advice! What the Hell is the matter with you? You are the only mentor he has aside from one other person and you can't even give him the simplest of answers? Are you trying to make his life harder?"

"I -"

"No! I'm not finished! Do you know how much damage control I've had to do because of you? You've freaked him out so much about Arthur dying that he doesn't even remember that isn't the main part of the bloody prophecy! Plus, he has all these trust issues and most of them - quite frankly - are your fault!"

"Uh, Lancelot." Arthur interrupted as he raised his hand to give a rather awkward wave at the dragon…Who could talk. The dragon was talking. "I thought you brought us here to talk about Camelot-"

"I'm getting there, sire. Just a moment more." Lancelot interrupted, though his tone went completely docile and polite at an alarming speed before turning back to the dragon. "By the way, you tell him to protect this kingdom and then immediately try murder everyone when

you’re freed? Fuck you. And you have the audacity to tell him to not trust Morgana?! You and her are the bloody same! Bitter and seeking revenge!"

"Hey, uh, Lance." Merlin tried "Don’t know this Emrys guy, but I don’t think he really dislikes Kilgharrah that much for all this." He said and gave the dragon a very weak smile. Arthur pulled him back before he could get too close to the damned thing.

"Merlin, please. I’m really almost done." Lancelot sighed and scowled up with narrowed eyes at the dragon "You’re also incredibly manipulative, you know that? Oh, Emrys says you are better now. He says you aren’t so bad after all these years but I bet if it wasn’t for his dragonlord powers you would still be a sneaky son of a-"

"Lancelot." Arthur interrupted. A glimmer of annoyance hinted at the other man’s features before it smoothed over into acceptance as he looked between the dragon and Arthur. From behind him, he could feel Merlin trying not push past him and drag Lancelot back within their ranks. A moment of silence passed.

"Kilgharrah, this is King Arthur of Camelot. Your majesty, this is Kilgharrah who is also known as the Great Dragon." He finally said, stepping to the side "Kilgharrah has served as an advisor to Emrys for many years."

"Yes," Arthur told him "I gathered that much." He said and turned to face the dragon warily. His men were all shifting behind him in anticipation though Kilgharrah himself didn’t look too bothered by their presence "And why do you wish to speak to me? I have no interest in allying myself with you or this Emrys that your false-goddess has thrown into my life."

Now, Arthur wasn’t sure if dragons tended to smile...But there was no other word for it as the creature bared it’s teeth and let out what could have been a breathy laugh.

"Here we go." Merlin muttered.

"Ah, young king. Allow me to acquaint you to the prophecy. You are but one side to a coin."

Lancelot grimaced.

"Uh, you might want to get ready. This may take awhile."

“It’s magic.” Leon frowned at him before turning to Arthur “Right?” He asked. Lancelot sighed before going back to staring at the crystal ball in front of him. Elyan also leaned down to look into its foggy depths.

“I don’t think it’s magic,” He announced and stood back up “I think Lancelot just likes looking at.”

“It’s how I talk to Arvutania.”

“Bless you.”

“No, Percival. It’s the goddess’ name,” Lancelot groaned and shoved the ball away. “She gave me this to send me messages about my duties to Emrys and Arthur.” He explained. Arthur gaped.

“I can tell you what duties you have to me. The first being to not waste your time looking into a bloody ball of fog!” He said with a note of indignation. “Lancelot, really-“ He started, but was cut off by the ball suddenly going gold. Elyan yelped, yanking out his sword in alarm as Lancelot blinked and leaned forward a bit.

“Huh…Do you hear that?” He asked as Gwaine inched forward to poke at the thing. “Stop it!” Lancelot told him and slapped his hand away. Arthur frowned. Lancelot’s eyes weren’t gold, but Arthur certainly couldn’t hear whatever he was hearing. Perhaps he was being cursed? Before he could push the damn thing off the table the ball dimmed once more.

“Well?” Percival asked as he joined Gwaine in trying to poke the ball “What did Arvutania say?” He asked. Arthur was momentarily so distracted by his knight’s perfect pronunciation of such a ridiculous name he almost didn’t catch Lancelot’s tired response.

“…Emrys, is stuck in a tree. I need to go help him.”

"Why?" Arthur complained as Lancelot impatiently bowed. "I thought you’ve been talking to the druids so I didn’t have to." He grumbled, looking over at Merlin "Tell him not to make me go."

"For once, we are a united front." Merlin said and turned to Lancelot "Don’t make him go. The druids don’t deserve such a curse.”

"I can’t make him do anything," Lancelot said patiently "I’m not the king...It would just look bad that we’ve had all these discussions on how they could potentially live in peace among our citizens only for the king to not even meet them." He said and Arthur paced up and down the length of the corridor, ignoring a few passing servants fixing him with curious looks.

"As long as they remain peaceful, I’m fine with them in my lands.” He said, rubbing his temple as he gritted the words out. “Why do I need to go myself and tell them such? I have other treaties to attend to and four trials to judge and -"

"Alright," Lancelot said, holding up his hands before fixing Merlin with a hard look. "I’ll tell them your terms myself. I’m sure they will be very understanding. Merlin." He added sharply. Arthur wasn’t sure why he felt the need to address the servant towards the end there but whatever his tactic was seemed to work. Guilt immediately played out on Merlin’s face.

"You... Should probably go, sire." He sighed, shoulders slumping "It is a big deal for them considering the years of fear they faced under your father. Seeing you will make the freedom more real." He said and Arthur spluttered for a moment. In truth… That was a bit of the issue.

Not that Arthur didn’t want the druids to be free. He had sympathized with their plights long before he became king. The thing was that he didn’t want it to be a big deal. To be faced with

the reality his father had hurt these people so badly that this was cause for celebration. He wanted it to be a minor thing that wouldn't have him tossing and turning at night.

But, contrary to popular belief, being king often meant doing the very thing you dreaded doing. Closing his eyes he raised his hands in surrender.

"Very well," He whispered "Just…Tell me this won't be the same as it was with the dragon, Lancelot."

"Oh, yeah." Merlin frowned and spun towards the knight "Do not start yelling on Emrys' behalf, Lancelot."

"He asked me to." Lancelot told him. Merlin narrowed his eyes.

"He did not."

"He did. He asked me to have a talking to with those who have wronged him."

"No he didn't! And who are you to decide who has wronged this man?" Merlin asked, turning bright red. Arthur sighed.

"A goddess told me-"

"This isn't what she meant and you bloody know it!" Merlin yelled before falling in step to pace next to the king. Finally, he spun around. "Arthur. Tell him he can't."

Arthur was a worn man. A tired one. Maybe he should go ahead and get a kid for the sole purpose of passing him the crown. His few years as king had been enough.

"Lancelot," He said and put a hand on either of the other man's shoulders "I respect your position…And I can see you have grown fond of this Emrys. Just…Please don't be too dramatic."

Lancelot gave a very stoic nod.

"Well, you kind of picked some random child to save your kind and then...Didn't interact with him? I get you're in hiding but perhaps you could have pulled him aside and maybe give him some direction? Explained some stuff about your religion and cultural beliefs so he didn't have to look them up illegally or talk to that ridiculous dragon? Maybe walk him through the prophecy a bit more? Tell him about multiple futures in more detail so he didn't panic and start acting against his better judgement? It feels like you chose him because he was good and kind and everything magic should be and then you lot just kind of let the world make him not that." Lancelot was saying as he continued pointing at his stick figures he had drawn in the dirt.

Arthur wasn't entirely for sure what he was showing them. In fact, he wasn't entirely for sure how they ended up here. He felt as though he had been tricked in some way.

Merlin looked incredibly, horribly, horrifically mortified on all of Camelot's behalf.

“I am so sorry.” He said to the group of druids “I… I understand you’ve been busy. Emrys doesn’t mind. Really.” He said, wringing his hands. Lancelot frowned. “Besides, Emrys never sought you out so really this is his fault if anything.” He added quickly.

“Emrys has a lot on his plate. It seems like a lot to expect him to risk his life and visit druids when they could very well reach out to him in their minds,” He said sharply and leveled Merlin with a stern look. “And if you don’t mind, Merlin, I will be the one in this meetings to decide if something is Emrys’ fault.” He added. Merlin let his mouth fall open, completely at loss for words as Lancelot turned to smile apologetically at the druids. “I really don’t mean to be rude-“

“You don’t?” Merlin muttered and Lancelot waved him away.

“I just am working to make sure everyone is on good terms.” He continued with a nod. “So, I think you should take more of an interest in Emrys. I don’t mean for this to be an attack on your previous actions. I simply serve as an outsider’s perspective… And I will ensure your relations with King Arthur continue to stay beneficial to you both.”

Silence followed as everyone suddenly turned to Arthur. Dear God. He gave a weak wave. Immediately the group whispered before some gave shy waves back.

“I see why Arvutania has chosen you, Sir Lancelot,” One of the men said with a bow of his head. “You will be the one to unite Emrys and the Once and Future King.” He smiled and a few others murmured lowly in agreement. Lancelot snorted.

“Oh yeah, I have plans for that.”

…Wait.

“What does that mean?” Merlin asked, beating him to it. “You said you were an ambassador. Not anything about…Uniting Arthur and Emrys.” He frowned. A few druids rose their eyebrows. One woman snorted and then immediately walked away as if Merlin had said something funny.

“Don’t worry about it.”

“Lancelot,” Arthur cut in “What does that mean?” He asked, fixing him with a scowl. He swore to every god in the Old and New Religion if there was anymore magical nonsense he was hiding…

“Well you and Emrys will have to meet each other in person eventually,” Lancelot said sounding entirely too innocent “I have very good plans for that.”

“What plans? Lancelot. Lancelot, tell me what plans-“ Merlin started but was cut off by the druids all bowing at once.

“Thank you for your time,” One woman (their leader, Arthur was pretty sure) smiled “We will definitely take your request to better engage with Emrys into consideration, good knight. Please come to us if you or the king need anything at all.” She said and locked eyes with

Arthur. “And thank you, your majesty. I’m not sure how to repay you.” She smiled, placing a hand on the boy next to her. Arthur grimaced.

“Could you perhaps tell me where I might find this Emrys?” He asked, just to take a stab at it. Lancelot fixed him with a betrayed look, lips puckering out in a slight pout at having his ‘Give Emrys some privacy’ rule being broken. The woman considered.

“…He is in your shadow.” She finally said and Merlin immediately stepped away.

“She didn’t mean literally, Merlin.” He scoffed with a roll of his eyes before giving the druids an exasperated look. “Thank you for…Your council.” He said as politely as he could. Honestly though. What kind of response was that? He had been hoping for something useful.

“You are quite welcome, your highness.” The woman smiled, eyes glittering with an amusement Arthur didn’t really understand. From beside him, Lancelot pulled out his crystal ball and scowled into it.

“You didn’t prepare me for this.” Lancelot told it accusingly. The ball flickered gold and Lancelot rolled his eyes before putting it away. Right. Arthur was ready to go home now. He was done with bloody druids for the day.

"Emrys doesn’t like him."

Ugh.

“Who? My uncle?” Arthur asked warily and glanced up from his papers “Why doesn’t Emrys like my - why?” He interrupted himself when he caught sight of his knight. “Just…Why?”

“Well, he says Aggravaine is not to be trusted-“

“No, Lancelot. Why is your face covered mud?” Arthur asked warily. Lancelot’s face blanked for a moment before realization crossed over his muddied features as he went to touch his nose.

“Oh! Right!” He chuckled and wiped some of it away “It better helps me connect to the spirit realm.”

Arthur couldn’t be sure… But there might have been a solid ten minutes of silence that followed.

“It…Helps you…What now?”

“Arvutania said I was doing well so I should probably help connect Emrys to his predecessors. Obviously, Emrys can speak to dead if he chooses to but he doesn’t always like his predecessors too much so I have to mitigate a bit…Him and Nimueh can really get into it-“

“So you’re practicing magic, then? Necromancy?” Arthur demanded, throwing up his hands. “Lancelot-“

“No! Of course not! I don’t even know if I’m capable of magic,” Lancelot shook his head. Arthur tilted his head. “You see, I’m more of like a human portal type thing-”

“I am so very close to beheading you right now.”

“I’m not doing anything wrong, sire.” Lancelot said, looking genuinely put out that Arthur wasn’t more interested in his death-defying treason. “I’ll eventually do it for you too.”

“You will not.”

“…don’t worry. It will have to be after you officially meet Emrys.”

“No. It won’t be ever. I don’t talk to the dead.”

“Yes, sire.” Lancelot said in a way that sounded so casual that Arthur didn’t believe his words were heeded for even a second. “Anyways, Emrys hates your uncle and thinks he’s a traitor and consorting with Morgana. He, uh, has given me a list of reasons as to why he believes this.” He said, holding up a piece of parchment. No. That wasn’t a piece of parchment. That was enough parchment to fill a small book. Arthur pressed the bridge of nose. He hated Arvutania for taking his best knight and turning him into a tool of torment.

“Very well. Go on.”

“Reason Number One: His name is Aggravaine. What kind of name is Aggravaine anyways? A bad one. No offense to your grandparents. Reason Number Two: If you look under his bed there is a spellbook. Not a normal spellbook either. I wouldn’t mind a normal spell book at all. It’s a book of dark magic which is really dodgy-“

“What is with the commentary?”

“I’m reading it verbatim.” Lancelot answered. Arthur stared, mouth parting a bit.

“The mighty Emrys wrote that dark magic was dodgy?” He demanded. Lancelot shrugged. “He’s a bit of a talker, isn’t he?” He muttered, making a note to have Aggravaine’s chambers searched. He doubted anything would come up, but if it got Emrys to shut up...

“He is a bit of talker… Might be why there’s over forty reasons on this list. He really does not like your uncle,” Lancelot mused, running his finger down the list “Ah, well… He does have stupid hair.” He murmured to himself. Arthur buried his face in his hands. “Oh, Reason Number Fourteen says that he has a creepy thing for Morgana. I’m not sure if that one counts because we’re her enemy though… I don’t know. He’s quite a bit older than her so we might just have to count that as a mark on his general character.”

“Just leave the list and get out, please.”

“I am so honored to meet you!” Mordred said as he stepped forward to shake Lancelot’s hand “I have heard so much about the Great Emissary.“ He was saying. Lancelot was, as usual, looking ridiculous. He was still wearing his usual armor that was required of him, but with certain additions that Arthur was not quite the fan of. Symbols of the Old Religion were

written in ink across his hands, disappearing under his sleeves and peeking out again on his neck. His hair was also grown out a bit with braids woven in with strips of cloth. Not to mention the amulet hanging from his neck (a gift from some other god of the Old Religion, apparently) and the dozens of bracelets that fit over his armor. Arthur shook his head. The Great Emissary. Ridiculous.

“You’re sweet,” Lancelot frowned as he let go of Mordred’s hand and looked him over with critical eyes. "How can you be the one to kill the king?”

Immediately, Gwaine and Percival rose their swords as Leon stepped in front of Arthur. Mordred froze.

“I…What?” He asked, voice going a little small. “I would never harm him!” He gaped, spluttering a bit. Lancelot, despite delivering very concerning news (that he didn’t bother to bring up to Arthur before this point by the way), smiled.

“Well, you do in one future at least. Prophecies don’t guarantee anything, but Emrys has a hard time moving past these sort of things. Now that he knows you are capable of it in one future he is going hate you until you no longer pose a threat.” He said with a sigh. “He can be incredibly stubborn.”

“So we kill Mordred.” Gwaine nodded. Lancelot frowned and shook his head as Mordred shuffled back nervously.

“With all due respect to Arthur, I don’t think we need to worry at the moment. I’m having the druids counsel Emrys on this matter to see how much of a threat he truly is.”

“Then we kill him.” Gwaine said. Lancelot turned to look at the other knight.

“No. Well, maybe.” He said with an apologetic look towards Mordred. “But I don’t think it will truly be a problem.” He said and smiled warmly at Mordred “You seem kind enough and will make a fine knight.” He added, clapping Mordred on the shoulder. “What do you think, sire?” Lancelot asked, turning to Arthur.

Arthur was…Well, why wasn’t he even surprised? He found a perfectly nice boy who saved his life and now he was destined to kill him. What the Hell? Mordred wasn’t dangerous. He looked like he was about to bloody cry for Christ’s sake!

“Is…Is this why Emrys tried to kill me?” Mordred asked before Arthur could answer, voice quiet. Lancelot blinked as he tilted his head.

“When has Emrys tried to kill you?”

“Many years ago… I was twelve, I think? I didn’t know-“

“Twelve?” Lancelot choked “He tried to kill you when you were twelve?”

“And we are here to finish the job.” Gwaine said calmly.

“No!” Lancelot yelled “Stop trying to kill him!” He said, hitting Gwaine’s arm. “I have to go kick Emrys’ ass.” Lancelot muttered while shaking his head “I told you that damned dragon made him paranoid. When I get ahold of him…” He muttered under his breath as he spun around and marched away.

Arthur watched him go, not bothering to point out that he wasn’t dismissed. The Old Religion had done something to his knight. It made him more loose lipped and exasperated. Truly tragic.

“…alright, he’s gone. Let’s kabob this bitch.” Gwaine said, lifting his sword. Leon cleared his throat and pushed the point of the the weapon down. “What? He’s supposed to kill Arthur and I heard Emrys say…Ah.” Gwaine winced when everyone turned to him.

“You know Emrys now?” Arthur demanded, voice rising. Of course. Of course, Gwaine knew Emrys. “How?!” He asked, shaking his head. “And you think so highly of him?” He added with a frown. He hadn’t been sure what to make of Lancelot’s opinion of the warlock, but clearly Gwaine had been won over too. Strange.

“Well…I kind of walked in on Emrys and Lancelot having a secret session discussing magic stuff,” Gwaine admitted with an uncomfortable shuffle “I’m very nosy so I just listened for an hour and left. So, I know him…Though I don’t think he knows I know…” He mused and wrinkled his nose in thought.

“Wait,” Percival frowned, tossing his sword into the ground so he could lean against it and pin Gwaine with a hard look. “It sounds like you know him.”

“I just said I know him.”

“No, like you knew him before. Like he’s in Camelot.”

“…No.”

“You’re lying!” Percival gaped “Do we know him?” He asked and Gwaine’s eyes widened before giving a resolute shake of his head. Arthur narrowed his eyes.

“Yes, you do.” Mordred finally said. Leon gasped while Gwaine rose his sword back up.

“YOU KNOW NOTHING YOU SMALL CHILD TRAITOR!”

“Mordred,” Arthur interrupted “If you’re destined to kill me, could you please just do it now?”

"So..." Lancelot said, plopping in front of Arthur’s desk with a tray of food "How are we feeling about magic today?"

"Where’s Merlin?" Arthur frowned as he peered at the plate in front of him. "This isn’t my usual breakfast." He added as he narrowed his eyes at the meats and cheeses "Where are the apples?"

"You don’t even like apples."

"Well...Yeah, but Merlin always brings them." Arthur muttered and took a bite of bread. Merlin was incredibly persistent about Arthur eating fruits for some reason. Apparently he was of the belief that meats and pudding alone were not a sustainable diet...Which was foolish because it was and Arthur would die standing by that fact ('Yeah, with a large waist and ten years earlier than you should’ Merlin’s voice echoed snidely in the back of his mind).

"Would you like me to bring you some apples?" Lancelot asked, voice perfectly polite and patient. Arthur scowled. "Then tell me how we’re feeling about magic today." He said, patiently, twisting one of the bracelets around his wrists. There was a new one that was a gift from either that peace forsaken goddess or the druids or Emrys himself. He couldn’t keep up at this point.

"Annoyed," Arthur answered, running a hand over his face "I’ve played along with this and spoken to druids and dragons and you constantly… And still I don’t feel comfortable with having it in my kingdom." He said, though he caught the lone note of uncertainty in his own voice. Lancelot nodded and Arthur felt a ridiculous amount of relief at his acceptance.

"And why is that?" He asked reasonably. Arthur made a face.

"I can...Accept that magic may not be inherently evil as I was told." Arthur said slowly "But how am I to truly trust these people and prophecies when they are so shrouded in mystery and deceit? And I know that is partly my fault," he added hastily when Lancelot opened his mouth "But Emrys doesn’t even trust me enough to speak face to face. How can I trust him in return?" He asked, folding his hands together as he spoke. Lancelot pursed his lips before giving a small nod.

"I see your point...Well, I doubt there is really much else I can do then."

"Correct."

"So we’ll just have to introduce you to Emrys."

"Very well. I - wait, what?" Arthur said, a little caught off guard as he accidentally knocked a book off his desk as he reached for a quill. "You said Emrys doesn’t want to meet with me!"

"He doesn’t," Lancelot said, running a hand over his face "And I was going to enjoy introducing you on your wedding day, but neither of you are working with me." He shook his head. Arthur felt his mind blank for a moment.

"You were going to introduce us on what?!" He demanded, choking a bit as he felt his face turn bright red "Are you out of your mind?!"

"I thought it would have been a nice symbol. Magic uniting with Camelot. I mean, it’ll probably still happen, but it won’t be as fun-"

"Lancelot, you are not marrying me off." Arthur said flatly. "End of story."

There was a pause.

"Alright, I'm going to remind you of that later down the road." Lancelot snorted and Arthur narrowed his eyes. "Your majesty-"

"I know him, don't I? Gwaine says I don't, but it makes sense. You are obviously fond of him and so is Gwaine...Neither of you will tell me his identity and clearly he's in Camelot if that list about Aggravaine is anything to go by… I know who it is, Lancelot." He said and Lancelot paled for a moment before giving a small laugh.

"You...I'll admit I didn't think you would figure it out."

Arthur rolled his eyes.

"I'll admit...I feel betrayed. I never imagined it would be someone so close to me." He admitted, a bit warily. He had been mulling this over for so long that it felt strange to admit it aloud. "But, I'll tell you now, I am not fond of Percival in that way. I definitely can't marry him."

Silence.

"Percival? That's who you think Emrys is?" Lancelot finally asked. He looked torn between relieved and utterly disappointed "I...No." He said and ran a hand over his face. "No, Arthur."

Huh. He was pretty sure he had nailed that.

"Then who? I - wait, is it you? Have you been under the guise as an emissary to hide your role as Emrys?"

Emrys. Emissary...Was their some wordplay he had missed here?

"I am not Emrys." Lancelot muttered and stood up with a low bow "I'll set up a meeting. If he disagrees I'm sure I could persuade him with saying you'll...Give him some time off?" He said, raising his eyebrows as if he said something important.

Ah. A clue. He frowned. Someone who he could give time off? And someone who talked a lot if that list was anything to go by - wait.

"Wait. Are you serious?" He choked out and Lancelot beamed "Gwaine seems much to reckless-"

Lancelot threw up his hands.

"Bye Arthur."

"Oh, come on! Is it not Gwaine then?"

"Are you angry?"

Arthur sighed from where he was currently lying on his bed, staring up at the ceiling. It wasn't very kingly, he'd admit. He should be sitting in his throne while looking down at

Merlin with unyielding eyes as the servant cowered below. Slowly, he let his gaze fall to where Merlin was standing in front of the bed.

“This is the ninth time you’ve asked me that.”

“Well, you’ve given me pretty much no response,” Merlin said and walked around so he could jab at Arthur’s arm. “I… Maybe I shouldn’t have said anything. I just thought…Well, Lancelot said you were coming around and I didn’t want to wait for him to force me to…” He mumbled, crossing his arms over his chest. “I just wanted to do this on my own terms but now you probably hate me and-“

“You’re such a girl,” Arthur complained and reached over to grab his wrist and pull him onto the bed next to him. Again, not very kingly… But it was just him and Merlin. He had plenty of time to act regal later. “I’m too tired to be angry.”

“…Well will you be angry when you wake up?” Merlin asked him. Arthur’s lips twitched.

“I’ll be too hungry to be angry.”

Merlin made a noise of irritation next to him.

“Will you be angry after you eat?” He asked, annoyance rising in his voice.

“Well, I can’t very well be angry when I’m not dressed properly-“

“Can you just tell me if I’m getting beheaded or burnt alive, Arthur?” Merlin asked and Arthur rolled over so he was facing him. He went quiet for a moment, studying the other man carefully. He didn’t look like an all-powerful warlock… Then again, maybe the trickiest part of being powerful was not looking the part.

“Lancelot did a good job easing me into all of this,” He finally sighed and bit his lip “I wish…It wasn’t you,” He admitted “But hey. Maybe you’ll make a better sorcerer than you do a servant.” He mused. Merlin’s body relaxed a little at that. “Why did you tell me now?”

“Well,” Merlin said and rolled over to also face him “It’s like I said, I wanted to decide when to do it…Also, we have a wonderful opportunity to mess with Lancelot.”

“I didn’t even think about how much he must have been annoying you too.”

“I get a call from a druid everyday to check in and make sure I’m doing okay.” Merlin said, sounding exasperated by the mere thought. “Also, did Lance mention some sort of marriage to you?” He asked and Arthur snorted with a nod. “…You know, that actually gives me an idea…” He said slowly. Arthur rose an eyebrow.

“You’re proposing already?”

Merlin grinned.

“My God. I cannot believe Lancelot did not tell me how beautiful you are!”

It was truly something. Arthur rarely had opportunities to act childish and play pranks so he made sure to savor the look on Lancelot's face as Arthur swooned at Merlin's feet.

Of course, Merlin did look like an old man, but Lancelot was unaware that Arthur knew about that bit. Also, poor Leon was an innocent bystander to this as well. Gwaine was somewhere watching with Percival, but at least they were now in on it. Arthur hadn't found a good time to inform Leon… Though, the man had watched Arthur's father fall in love with a troll so he could take this.

"Dear boy," Merlin said in his croakiest, oldest voice "You make me feel young again." He told him, putting a hand over his heart dramatically.

"I am so very pleased to meet you, Emrys. Lancelot was completely right. Let's get married."

"Um…" Lancelot started "I…um. One second." He said and whipped out his crystal ball. "Hey. I need you. Arvutania?"

"Bless you." Leon said absently from where he was gawking at Merlin and Arthur with unconcealed horror. From somewhere else in the room there was the sound of wind.

"That's my name. My name is Arvutania." A voice said and Lancelot almost dropped the ball in alarm.

Sure enough, Goldilocks was suddenly there, glowing brightly as Leon yanked out his sword. Percival and Gwaine appeared from their hiding spot to follow suit though with far less enthusiasm at their show being interrupted.

"Are you two done?" She asked, raising her brow sharply at them… Wait. If his servant could be an undercover warlock then his physician could definitely be a golden goddess in disguise. He'd have to look into that. "Or would you like to continue to torture my poor emissary?"

"Oh? So now you're going to talk to me." Merlin muttered and the old man melted away into his normal self. Leon made a choking noise. "We only had ten minutes to mess with him." He said and Lancelot whipped around.

"What?" He demanded "You…You knew? How long? Arthur, we're you playing dumb this entire time?!" He asked, face going bright red. Arthur shrugged. Let him think that. Before he could say anything more, Arvutania rose her hands in a silent demand for silence. Arthur rose his eyebrows at that, hoping she was about to say something important. He would *not* be ordered around in his own castle unless it was for a good reason - goddess or not.

"Sir Lancelot," She smiled and turned to place a hand on his shoulder "Thank you. It is partly because of you that the first part of my prophecy has come to fruition," she began, but paused when Lancelot suddenly stiffened. Arthur glanced at Merlin for an explanation but the man only shrugged.

"Wait. *Your* prophecy?" He asked slowly. Arvutania blinked, still sparkling in the light of the window. Merlin walked over to place a hand on his friend's arm.

"I told you she was the goddess of prophecy-"

"I thought she just *told* the prophecy. Not that she made it!" Lancelot burst out, making everyone jump at the sudden anger in his voice. "*You* are responsible for this? You chose for a *child* to be *born* with *magic?"* He demanded. Arthur thought back to the dragon. That wasn't good. "In the middle of a magical purge?! And let me guess, you were probably the one who made Arthur's life hard too!" He said, voice rising. Gwaine immediately started inching between the two. "Who makes a prophecy that bloody difficult? No wonder you had to enlist me! This thing was too bloody hard to navigate without intervention! What? You expected them to figure this all out on his own? Was Merlin supposed to one day risk his life and tell Arthur the truth with no knowledge he would be accepting of magic? Was Arthur supposed to find out the most important person in his life had magic with little to no positive exposure to the damn thing?"

"Lancelot."

"And the very idea that anyone could make sense of this is...Bewildering. Terrible. Terrible job. They are *good people*. That's why you chose them right? So why did you make this so impossible? Was it fun for you or something?"

"Lancelot."

"Your majesty. Merlin." Lancelot sighed, turning to look at them. "It is part of my job to help not only you communicate, but to help establish a communication between you and the gods of the Old Religion. Please just wait a moment." He told them. Arthur considered ordering him to shut up, but there was a look on Arvutania's face that made him hold back. "Futhermore, what even *was* the whole prophecy? Like, I never heard the whole thing. Was this just a first draft or something? You can't just throw together a first draft and call it a day-"

Chapter End Notes

...That's Lancelot calling me out bc this is definitely my first draft lmao. I really liked the idea of Lancelot being a sort of half-knight/half-magic whisperer. Definitely going to play a bit more with in the second chapter.

Also! In addition to the ones I already have planned for the series I've listed out all the ones you guys mentioned wanting to see. This isn't the order they're going to be in or anything, but I wanted to let you know they are definitely coming. So far we got:

-Ygraine lives (I already have an idea for this and I'm so pumped)
-Uther (specifically a Merlin and Uther duo which I think is hilarious and amazing)
-Deagal (aka the druid boy that Merlin DEFINITELY would have adopted if he hadn't died)

-Elyan (my boy who deserved more)
-Mordred (I'm going to do one w/Mordred at some point but if you want to read a Good!Mordred fic then I have one called 'Thick as Sorcerers' that you can read until this one comes up)
-Morgana (the queen of deserving more)
-Gilli (WHERE THE FUCK DID HE GO?!)
-Alator (a few people requested him so he might be first)
-Gwaine (...he deserved to know about Merlin's magic damnit and I will rectify it)
-Percival (my soft giant child)
-The Druids in general (hardcore agree with this one)

...In conclusion. Literally every single character on this show has been wronged lmao. If there anymore you want me to add on let me know!

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Arthur didn't think he was being unreasonable.

He thought *Lancelot* was being unreasonable. Oh sure, he went around acting like he was just oh-so-important during his meetings with various gods and goddesses and serving as a liaison of sorts between magical and non-magical beings in between his duties as a knight. But you know what? That whole 'Great Emissary' thing all started because he was supposed to serve *him* and *Merlin*, okay? Why was he able to ditch *those* duties now?

"...you can't be serious."

"I am completely serious," Arthur said, throwing up his hands "I don't understand, Lancelot. Are you or are you not seeing Merlin?"

"I, well... Yes, I suppose, but-"

"And you *will* be speaking to him later on, correct?" He asked and Lancelot held up a finger.

"Yes, my lord, but the issue I'm having-"

"Do you not think my message is important? I need to let him know that there are potential spies in our midst. Shouldn't he know this?"

"Of *course*, he should, sire. But I think this has esca-"

"Then *tell him*, Lancelot. It isn't that hard. It's your job to keep us communicating after all."

"He's standing *right there,* Arthur!" Lancelot burst out and gestured to where Merlin was boldly sitting in Arthur's favorite chair with his nose in a book. The audacity was truly alarming. "I...You know what? Fine. Merlin!" Lancelot called, glowering at Arthur. Merlin hummed in acknowledgement. "Arthur wants you to know there might be spies in Camelot." He said. Merlin clicked his tongue as he turned the page. Arthur narrowed his eyes, a little outrage at the nonplussed reaction at the idea of there being enemies within their lands.

"Tell him I *could* use my magic to investigate... If I felt like it." He hummed. Lancelot closed his eyes.

"You two *cannot* keep doing this." He said quietly, but Arthur was too busy being outraged to listen.

"Lancelot! Tell Merlin I'm *ordering* him to investigate."

"Lancelot, tell Arthur that it is unethical to order one of his subjects to break laws that *he* set in place...Especially if the rationale for it is being above the very rules he sets for the rest of

us lowly peasants." Merlin said, snapping the book shut. Arthur glowered at him.

"Lancelot. Please tell Merlin that I have changed the laws to accommodate magic. Just because I still think battle magic should be banned-"

"Lancelot, please point out the hypocrisy our king has in that any idiot could use a sword but magical beings can't even properly defend themselves. But hey. At least they can legally use some nice healing spells for when the said idiots go and stab them with their very legal swords." Merlin said, tossing the book to the side so he could stand up and stalk up to where Arthur and Lancelot were standing.

"Lancelot, could you please-"

"Lance, before he even starts, let Arthur know I am not interested in-"

"Okay, enough!" Lancelot shouted, cutting them both off "You two need to knock it off! I am so tired of doing this every other week. Last time it wasn't even about anything important! You argued about the color of the *curtains*. For two days! *Two days!* I went to speak to Arvutania and when she asked how my duties went I had to tell her I didn't do any of them because I spent two bloody days relaying messages about *curtains!"* He said and when Merlin opened his mouth, pointed a finger at him in warning. "Talk. To. Each other." He said.

Arthur narrowed his eyes. Merlin made a face before turning away. For a moment their eyes met and Arthur felt the frustration boiling under his skin die down a bit. Merlin also seemed to slump as the tension withered. There was a long pause and Arthur gave a subtle shrug. Merlin rose a brow before biting back a smile, seemingly understanding the message Arthur was trying to send. The argument definitely wasn't over...In fact, it would likely pick up the second Lancelot left, but that didn't mean they couldn't put it on hold for ten minutes to have fun.

"Merlin," Arthur said slowly. From between them he heard his knight sigh in relief. "Please tell Lancelot not to address his king in such a manner."

"Of course, Arthur. Could *you* please tell Lancelot that I thought he was known for his kind and noble temperament...A temperament I definitely did *not* hear just now."

"I will be sure to do so...Oh, could you also please tell Lancelot-"

"I hate you both." Lancelot muttered and left the room.

Lancelot's room was organized chaos.

While Merlin's newly assigned tower was just general chaos with potions exploding and spells flying everywhere (more proof that he had been an abysmal servant, surely) there still appeared to be a method to his knight's chambers. Herbs were hung and organized by magical use while on the other side of his room swords and armor hung in a similar method. Potions were labeled along with tonics for various injuries while amulets and tomes of books on the Old Religion were piled neatly by the window...Right next to Arthur's training regimen for

the month. It was a lot... Much more than the ordinary man could handle, but Arthur had every ounce of faith that if anyone could balance such duties it would Lancelot.

He understandably second-guessed this when in the middle of the meticulously organized room, he saw the man in question shouting at a duck.

"...absolutely, completely unacceptable! Who do you even think you are?" He was saying. The duck quacked. "Oh, yes. I know *who you are*, you bloody prick. I cannot allow this. I've already had Arvutania come to me on this matter on your behalf and I told her no and I will tell you as well. *No."*

The duck quacked again.

"I do not care if I'm a mere mortal. *You* are a coward. You wish to speak to me and do not even come in the form I take? You must...*Hide* your hideous ways under the guise of an adorable feathered creature? I will not stand for it." He sniffed and crossed his arms. Arthur cleared his throat.

"Hi...Lance." He greeted. The duck looked over at him and...Okay, Arthur *swore* he heard it sigh. He swore on his life it did. "Who is your friend?" He asked, wondering if maybe Lancelot had cracked under the pressure of his duties. Perhaps Arthur should get him to Gaius.

"This is...Quakka." Lancelot muttered, gesturing to the duck. "And he is trying to ruin everything."

...Right. Arthur looked at the duck.

"Um, alright. Cracker. Lovely. Makes sense for a duck."

Lancelot groaned.

"Not... Not cracker. *Quakka*. He's the god of life in the Old Religion." Lancelot said. *Oh*. Arthur nodded before giving a small grimace. Somehow... This was worse. Arthur really didn't care much for learning about the Old Religion (that was what Lancelot was for after all) but he knew that it was a bad sign to have gods randomly popping into his castle. He says this only because Arvutania didn't take well to Lancelot's outburst a few months prior and destroyed one of his very lovely towers (it was still under construction).

"Could you yell at the god of life outside the castle please?"

"No," Lancelot snapped and threw his arms up "I cannot yell at the god of life outside the castle, my lord. I am fighting for Merlin's soul right now, thank you." He said and turned back to the duck. "He has family and friends within Avalon's depths. You expect him to...Do what exactly? Just wait around forever for the second part of the prophecy? Abso-fucking-lutely not. If Arthur can come back from the dead as part of the prophecy then so can Merlin."

"Wait," Arthur frowned, holding up a hand "What? I can come back from the dead?"

"Once and *Future* King, your majesty. Now please." Lancelot told him and looked down at the duck. "You're not making him immortal. You need my permission to do that and I won't give it."

"Merlin's *immortal?"*

"Arthur," Lancelot sighed and gestured to the duck. "Please just give us a moment." He said as the duck began to flap his wings furiously as he loudly quacked, eyes glowing a horrible shade of green that had Arthur shuffling back. "I'm sorry. Just because you want Merlin around for eternity to do *your* job does not mean I am going to allow it. He's human. All humans die. Right, Ehna?" He asked and Arthur spun around. Who the *fuck* was Ehna?

This was promptly answered by a little girl popping up from freaking nowhere.

"That depends on how we define death, Sir Lancelot." She said, which...God help him. This five-year-old with pink bows in her hair should not ever say that sentence. "But I will concur that humans should experience *all* forms of death. However, I think the question we *should* be asking is if Emrys qualifies as human. He does qualify more as one of us than one of you." She said and large, green eyes latched onto Arthur. There was almost an hungry look in them that was so disturbing that Arthur considered jumping out of the window to avoid her. "Don't worry, your majesty. *You* are very human." She smiled.

Arthur, thoroughly creeped out, looked at Lancelot for an explanation.

"Goddess of death." He said and Arthur gave a nervous laugh. Right. Sure. The gods of life and death were in his home. What could go wrong?

Quakka used his beak to knock over a book.

"Merlin is human," Arthur decided to interject. The group turned to him. "Only humans cry about stubbing their toe for three hours."

Silence followed. Finally, just when Arthur thought he was going to get blown up and his soul reaped by a small child, the duck quacked once more.

"Quakka said that was a very good rebuttal." Lancelot told him.

"...they want to meet you both, of course, but it'll have to be after you finish with the treaty signing in Mercia." Lancelot said, running a finger over a list as he sat at the Round Table, tapping a finger thoughtfully on the wood. "How important do you find the unicorns?" He asked. Both Merlin and Arthur exchanged wary looks - thinking of the last time they interacted with a unicorn. Arthur grimaced and turned back to Lancelot.

"Very important. I'll forget the treaty with Mercia if they want." He said and Lancelot blinked a few times before shrugging and writing something down.

"And you, Merlin?"

"Yeah...Prioritize the unicorns." He said with a nod. Lancelot gave them a baffled look, but nodded.

"Alright, I'll arrange a meeting for that. Now we just have to decide what to do with Benji over here," He said with a nod towards the goblin sitting with a scowl in the chair next to him. Arthur grimaced. Goblins were not his favorite magical creature... But Lancelot had spent the better part of two months trying to get them all on the same page so that Arthur didn't have to deal with a war among magical creatures. Apparently, Benji was a goblin who had gotten loose within Camelot's walls many years ago before Merlin captured him again. As part of his new deal with magic, Arthur was *supposed* to release him (along with other non-dangerous magical creatures his father might have captured)... Only Merlin had vehemently argued that while Benji wasn't dangerous he would be a pain in the ass just let go.

"Yes... Benji." He said with a frown at where the creature was currently chained and bound in lead chains. "If I let you out will you give me donkey ears again?" He asked. Amber eyes met his before giving an inhumane sound that had Merlin wrinkling his nose. He wondered if he could understand whatever that meant. Lancelot winced.

"Um...Yeah. He's probably going to do that."

"Great," Arthur said dryly and looked to Lancelot. "Could we just put him in the dungeons for now? Then you could maybe ask Artvutania what to do about...This." He said as the goblin laughed wildly in the background. Merlin rolled his eyes. Lancelot nodded warily. The man already had so much to deal with that the idea of trying to tame a goblin wreaking on havoc was just as appealing to him as it was to Merlin and Arthur. "Right. Good. GUARD!" He called out. Immediately the door opened and one of his guards walked inside with a sigh.

Arthur was about to ask what the Hell he was sighing about when the the man immediately went over to Merlin and started pulling him out of the chair.

"I...What are you doing?"

There was an awkward pause.

"He wants you to take the goblin down to the dungeons, Anthony. Not me." Merlin whispered and the guard's eyes widened slightly as he seemed to process Lancelot sitting next to Benji (who was laughing again) and Arthur's outraged expression.

"Oh...I'm so sorry, my lord." Anthony frowned and stepped away from Merlin. There was a pause where Merlin and the guard exchanged almost regretful looks. Arthur waited for him to grab Benji and leave, but nothing happened. "...How are you?" Anthony finally asked.

"I'm doing okay. It's been awhile since we've talked hasn't it?" Merlin asked. "How's your daughter?"

"Oh, she's doing great. Her birthday is next week."

"You don't say? She'll be nine then? That's exciting."

"Merlin," Arthur interrupted and rose his hands "We're in the middle of a meeting." He said, trying not to sound annoyed. Lancelot gave an apologetic smile at the pair.

"I only have a few more things on the list, I promise." Lancelot said and tapped his finger on the next item on the piece of parchment in front of him. "Arvutania wants to talk to you about visiting the dead again. Nimueh has promised to - what are you doing?" He asked when Merlin reached over and grabbed the key from Anthony's belt. "Merlin. Merlin, you have to do this."

"I can't. I'll be in the dungeons." Merlin told him and started pushing Anthony towards the door. "Though you can tell Nimueh and Morgause that I still loathe any advice they might give me." He added and turned to Anthony. "I don't know why the gods want me to listen them. They've both tried to kill me and Arthur." He explained and Anthony gave a sympathetic hum of acknowledgement.

"I didn't send you to the dungeons, Merlin. Sit down." Arthur told him with a scowl. If *he* had to suffer than so did Merlin and that was that. God knows how long Lance could go on about this stuff. Besides, if Merlin didn't talk to dodgy dead sorcerers then Lancelot might try to get Arthur to seek advice with dodgy dead kings and honestly... He'd rather not.

Merlin made a face. Then immediately, a smirk overtook his face in a way that Arthur incredibly nervous.

"Hey, Lance... Do you think the druids would have some sort of magical remedy for Arthur? I'm looking, but can't seem to find one." He mused, tilting his head. Arthur narrowed his eyes. Don't bite...Do not bite... He's trying to trick you, Arthur. Don't fall for it.

"Remedy for what?" He asked because he was an idiot and weak and always fell for this sort of thing when Merlin tempted him.

"Well...I don't know if you've noticed, but since becoming king we've had to add some holes to your belt and I'm just concerned about how that's going to impact your fighting. I mean, obviously you have me to protect you but that's no reason to get lazy." Merlin clicked his tongue. Lancelot sighed and put his quill down as Benji's wildly laughed in the background. Arthur closed his eyes in defeat.

"...Just take him, Anthony."

"Wait. *What?"* Arthur spluttered as he stood with his sword out. Lancelot gave a helpless shrugged as the man he had pinned under his hand looked completely riveted by the current development. "Explain what the Hell a *Vow of Moral Chastity* is, Lancelot."

"Don't take it too literally, Arthur." Merlin was saying from where he was also being useless. "It just means there are certain hours of the day where we are forbidden to partake in immoral behavior under any circumstances."

"We?!" Arthur swung around "No, no, no. *You* have taken this vow as well?" He demanded and ran a hand through his hair. "What does that even *mean?* You can being a horrible person

the rest of the time, but for a couple hours you have to be good?" He asked, throwing his hands up. "You're a *knight*. This is a *battle*. What are supposed to do?" He asked, gesturing wildly around at the hundred of other enemies surrounding then. Luckily, Merlin had frozen them all with a wave of his hand, but Arthur wasn't sure what the next move was considering neither Merlin or Lancelot were willing to kill at the moment.

"Maybe we can reason with them?" Lancelot frowned with a helpless shrug. "I'm sorry, Arthur, but it is so much *harder* to connect with the gods without the vow."

"It actually has a really interesting history," Merlin jumped in brightly "You see, at any given time magic can be used for good or evil. However, the Old Religion prefers balance and unfortunately, most humans aren't balanced creatures-"

"Does this story tell me how we're going to survive when you unfreeze these people?" Arthur cut him off. Merlin tilted his head and looked around. One man had someone's head on a stick for Christ's sake...And Lancelot wanted to *reason* with them? That wasn't going to happen.

"There's only an hour left before the vow finishes," Lancelot said with a shrug. He turned to Merlin. "How long can you keep this spell up?"

"Um...Thirty minutes?" He frowned. Arthur groaned. "Well, I didn't know we were going to get attacked today!" He complained loudly and Arthur held up his hands.

"Okay. Consider this. Killing them *is* the moral thing to do. If we don't kill them then they'll kill us *and* the villagers *and* probably other people. Seems like the right thing to do...So it's not breaking your stupid vow." He shrugged. Lancelot and Merlin both made faces at that.

"Sounds...Like a loophole. Though the Old Religion does like loopholes," Merlin frowned and looked at Lancelot "Ask Arvutania what she thinks." He said and Arthur pinched the bridge of his nose.

"Lancelot, I still don't know why you thought this was a good idea. You're a bloody knight." He muttered. Lancelot threw up his free hand in frustration.

"I try to be moral and noble on principle, Arthur. I didn't think it would change that much in my daily activities! And it's really hard to tell if a fish is just a fish or an angry god at times. When you take the vow it connects your soul more to magic so - oh, hi Arvutania." He interrupted himself as the stupid crystal ball gleamed gold in his pack. Curiously, he grabbed and lifted it up. "Ah...Good point." He turned to Merlin. "Can you just knock them all out with your magic?" He asked.

Merlin opened his mouth in what look to be defiance before going silent as realization seemed to hit him.

"...Oh. Um. Yeah, I think so." He frowned and gave Arthur a small, bashful shrug. "Sorry, I didn't think of that before."

"See?" Lancelot said to the crystal ball "You are so much more *helpful* when you don't say things in riddles-"

"Lancelot."

"Hm?"

"Lancelot."

"Yes?"

"*Lancelot."*

"What is it, Merlin?" Lancelot frowned as he lowered his sword and moved away from the dummy he had been hacking at. Arthur looked between the two. He should be more annoyed that Merlin was interrupting this training session, but he could also see that the sorcerer looked to be at ten minutes away from blowing something up so he just decided to watch.

"What...Did you *do?"* Merlin asked, voice high with annoyance. Arthur raised his brows. Oh, that wasn't good. Gwaine and Leon stopped in their repetitions to fix them all with curious looks. Lancelot only stared for a moment, lips pursing for a moment before realization seemed to dawn on him. He shrugged and crossed his arms over his chest.

"Something *you* should have done long ago."

"I should not have done that. Nobody should do that. Ever. I...Are you *insane?"* Merlin asked, throwing up his hands. "I tried, Lancelot. I really did! I'm aware that this whole thing was my fault and of *course* I tried to fix it, but do you honestly think this will work?" He demanded. Gwaine raised his hands.

"What did he do? Is it about Mordred again? Merlin, I promise if you still think he's bad I'll kill him."

"Hi Gwaine." Mordred said from where he was also practicing with his sword. Gwaine paused to look over his shoulder and fix the other knight with a hard look.

"Don't think your adorable, innocent eyes will fool me, traitor. I know evil when I see it." He scowled. Mordred frowned as he lowered his sword and shuffled closer to the group. Gwaine tried to push him away. With a pout, Mordred went to look over at Merlin.

"...you said you would make him stop being mean to me." He muttered. Merlin waved the complaint away and Arthur made a note to address all of that later.

"Yeah, yeah. Gwaine, you're doing great." Merlin told him and Mordred gasped in offense. "But Lancelot, I'm serious. Morgana will kill us. You can't just organize a meeting with her like she's a visiting noble or even like you would a god of the Old Religion. She will use it to trap and kill us." He argued and Arthur's eyes widened as he spun around to look at his knight.

"You're trying to meet with *Morgana?"* He spluttered and ran a hand over his face. "You didn't mention this to me!" He accused. Lancelot did look a little guilty at that as he shuffled under the weight of Arthur's indignation before tucking his sword back into his belt.

"You need to make peace with your sister, Arthur...And *you* need to tell her the truth." He added to Merlin.

"Yeah, I'm sure that will work. Saying 'Hi, Morgana. I'm a powerful sorcerer and *still* didn't help you with your magic' is going to make her see the light, isn't it?" Merlin scowled. "Or pointing out that I'm the one who kept thwarting her many plans for revenge? No way." He shook his head. "Listen, Lancelot... I... I would of course be willing to try, but I don't think you understand how dangerous and angry and *bitter* she is. Besides, *you* are lying to her right now!" Merlin told him, shoulders slumping slightly.

"I have done the same thing to her as I have done when Arthur didn't know who you were. I have simply been visiting in disguise and telling her I have messages from Emrys and trying to convince her to give Camelot a second chance." He said stubbornly.

"Yeah. Lying. Not very noble, Sir Lancelot." Merlin snapped back, but Arthur could see a glimmer of hope in his eyes. Arthur bit his lip.

"It's true Morgana is... Hard to reach," He sighed and looked at Leon. The knight gave a small, saddened smile. "I invite you to try and reason with her... But even with all your diplomacy skills I doubt you can bring her back to us, Lancelot." He said and swallowed. He wouldn't dare get his hopes up. Lancelot had done some amazing things in the past - having gods on your side was helpful, surely - but he wouldn't dare let himself believe he could achieve such a feat. "And no matter what, it would be incredibly dangerous." He added. Lancelot nodded.

"Don't worry. I have help."

"So," Merlin said after ten minutes of painfully awkward silence. "How have you been?"

Morgana rose an eyebrow from her spot across the table. It was the first time in years Arthur had actually seen her up close. She looked...Tired. Much too pale. Part of him wanted to grab a servant to fetch her something to eat but wasn't sure it would be taken too well.

"Let's see," She said as she tapped a finger to her lips "I have been summoned her by a man wearing a ridiculous hat to learn my ex-friend and lowly servant of Camelot is actually the most powerful of my kind and the man prophesized to kill me. The same man is helping my brother run a kingdom that *still* doesn't fully accept magic even though I'm sure Arthur dearest here pretends to be comfortable with it because he has such heart eyes for pale, gangly warlocks." She listed off before leaning forward "And instead of killing you both right now I am currently without my magic because the goddess of magic has taken it from me on the behest of the aforementioned man in the ridiculous hat... How do you think I'm doing, *Emrys?"*

From his spot at the head of the table, Lancelot touched his hat.

"...Arvutania said it would help me connect more with magic." He frowned. Morgana rolled her eyes.

"I heard that you offended Arvutania not too long ago, Great Emissary. Do you think, perhaps, she *might* be messing with you?" She asked. Lancelot slowly took off the hat. "At any rate, I doubt much will come of this. The only reason I really came was for Mordred. He shouldn't be condemned to the likes of you." She said snidely and gave Lancelot considering look. "And I will admit you have a few more brain cells then these two. Perhaps you may convince me that these two won't be the downfall of my kingdom."

From the opposite end of the table, Mordred nudged Gwaine and Percival.

"*See?* She appreciates me." He whispered and poked at Gwaine's chest "If I'm the reason she decides to stay in Camelot then you owe me an apology."

"No." Gwaine said bluntly.

"I don't think you're evil Mordred," Percival smiled at him "Neither does Gwaine, really. He just doesn't like people Merlin doesn't like."

"Percy, we *talked* about this. It's called being ride or die," Gwaine sighed "Even if your friend is being stupid or unreasonable or shady you still go along with it because you're loyal and love them enough to forego reason. Mordred is *obviously* not of the ride or die caliber. Don't be like Mordred." He explained. Morgana cleared his throat and Gwaine scowled at her. "What? Arthur didn't even really do anything and you tried to kill him. Don't act like you can clear your throat at me, my lady." He said and then snorted. "Sorry, Lance. I'm stealing your thunder. Go on." He said with a wave of his hand.

Lancelot pinched the bridge of his nose before turning to Morgana.

"Morgana, there's no question you've been wronged-"

"Oh my God, Lancelot. You lying bitch." Gwaine groaned. Leon hit him on the back of the head.

"Merlin and Arthur have both made mistakes in the past...But so have you," Lancelot continued, ignoring Gwaine completely. "And I know that more than anything... You don't want to be like Uther." He said gently. Morgana stiffened. "So, please...Do what he wasn't capable of and just *listen*. Then, after all of this is said and done, you can decide what you really want and we will respect it." He said and tilted his head. "You are a high priestess, correct?"

Morgana gave a hesitate nod.

"...have you met Quakka?" He asked. Morgana blinked but nodded again. "Great. No matter what happens here, you and I can drink later to forget that experience together." He said and slammed the table. "Let's begin. So, you know Merlin can...Be a bit of an idiot," He said with an apologetic look towards his friend. Merlin held up his arms in offense. "But I've created a

list on why ninety-nine percent of it is not his fault. Reason number one... Have you *met* Kilgharrah?"

"Oh, not this again-"

"No, no Merlin." Arthur said, braving his first words since this meeting came to order. "Let him finish."

"Your majesty?" Leon's voice said sounding wary as he entered the throne room. Arthur took one look at him and knew that the day was going to be a long one. He had learned to read most of his knights pretty well and...Well, both Leon and Percival looked as if they had been war. "Um...There is an issue."

"Okay?" He frowned and straightened up, preparing himself for the worst. Leon and Percival exchanged long looks before nodding. "Tell me what's happened."

"Well, you know Merlin is a dragonlord."

"I do, yes."

"And you know Lancelot is doing this Great Emissary thing and is loyal to *both* you and Merlin."

"Uh huh."

"But is also your knight and thus is aware of the dangers knights have faced against magical creatures."

"Leon, please just tell me what's happening." Arthur said, running a hand though his hair. Leon opened his mouth a few times as he seemingly tried to find the words, but before he could say much more, Percival broke.

"Lancelot gave Merlin the dragon back!" He said loudly. A few servants walking by froze at the outburst, eyes widening in horror. One girl dropped a plate of pies and screamed at the mere mention of a dragon.

Oh god. Oh no. Arthur didn't need much more to be said as he sprinted out of the throne room to where he saw most people were gathering. Sure enough, Merlin was on the ground with what looked to be a white dragon playing on the ground as Lancelot narrowed his eyes in what looked to be absolute fury... Which was confusing because usually a happy Merlin meant a happy Lancelot.

"What the *Hell* is this?!" Arthur spluttered. The dragon was about the size of a dog with glittering silver eyes. It squawked when it saw Arthur and he raised his sword immediately in defense. Merlin yelped and held up his hands to throw up an invisible wall between them. "*Merlin*." He hissed and Lancelot immediately launched himself in between the two.

"It's fine. It's just a baby and Merlin has it under control." He said quickly.

"You don't look pleased by it." He accused and Lancelot rolled his eyes as the dragon sneezed out fire. A few people jumped at it, but Merlin only laughed and continued playing with the thing as if it was some kind of sweet creature rather than an actual, fire-breathing, flying, havoc-wreaking *dragon.* "Why is it here?"

"Because Kilgharrah is an asshole." Lancelot said flatly. "Listen, I know you said you didn't want Aithusa to be in Camelot. I get it. I do. And at the time I *know* we all agreed it would be better if she stayed with Kilgharrah... But like I said. Kilgharrah is an asshole. I went to check on them both and he had *no* idea where she even was...A baby! He didn't know where a *baby* was. Aithusa is the last of his bloody kind! Why wouldn't he keep a closer eye on her?" He demanded and shook his head in frustration. "So I got Merlin to call her and we're going to find a better place for her." He explained. Arthur stared.

"...Not here though, right?" He asked. Lancelot rose his eyebrows.

"I was actually thinking this would be a good time to make good on your promise to Morgana."

"No."

"Yes."

"No."

"My lord, please."

"No." Arthur insisted and put his sword down. "It's a *dragon,* Lancelot. I know I told her I would prove my acceptance of magic, but it's still a *fucking dragon."* He said, a little hysterically. No way. No bloody way. A dragon! It was a *dragon!*

"Arthur, I'm a dragonlord." Merlin frowned from where he had picked Aithusa up and carried her over. Arthur backed up, but Lancelot immediately pulled him closer. "I promise she will be well behaved as long as I'm around." He said and kissed the top of Aithusa's head. "Plus, she is super cute."

"Nope. Still a dragon. Dragons aren't cute."

"My lord," Lancelot tried and raised his hands "I have a compelling argument." He said. Arthur crossed his arms and waited. "If we raise this one right then maybe it won't be an asshole like Kilgharrah-"

"You really need to move past this Kilgharrah thing, Lancelot."

They ended up keeping the damn dragon.

It was a little strange to just... Talk to Morgana after everything that had happened with them.

It was hard. Part of him still expected her to turn around and betray them. He found himself constantly paranoid on keeping his plans secret and knights far from her. Luckily, she seemed

fine with it for the most part. Their relationship wasn't *amazing*, but there was at least a mutual understanding of one another and Arthur felt like maybe in time... It could at least resemble something he used to see between them.

"Your emissary...Can he talk to animals?" She asked and nodded to where Lancelot was sitting on the shore of a pond, chatting idly to a frog.

"Um, usually the animals are gods or goddesses of the Old Religion. Though, recently Merlin said he's actually gained full sight or something like that. It essentially means he can occasionally borrow the eyes of the gods to better communicate with people or something." He explained, thinking of the other week when Lancelot had to spend three hours settling land claims between magical and non-magical people. He wondered if his fancy magic sight was any use there.

"Hm," Morgana mused "Interesting. So, you're a pagan now then?"

A pause.

"Um. What?" He laughed nervously. Yeah, sure. Arthur had finally cracked under the relentless reasoning of Lancelot and Merlin to completely release any bans on magic. Yeah, he had allowed temples of the Old Religion to be rebuilt... And he might have restored some old holidays his father had forbidden, but, um... *He* wasn't a member of the Old Religion. No way. Arvutania was the *worst*. Quakka had a temper. Ehna creeped him the Hell out. He was lucky those were the only gods he ever met.

"Or maybe it is just religious tolerance," Morgana said quickly "I just figured you interacted with it so much now..." She trailed off and Arthur had spent the rest of walk in complete disarray at the realization.

It was this conversation which led him to talking to a frog.

"So now I'm just confused," Arthur was saying "I don't know what you're the god of or anything, but I'm sure you have some wisdom." He said at the edge of the bank. The frog croaked. Maybe this was what Lancelot meant when he went on harping about how hard it was to connect with the gods. Did that croak *mean* something? Did he just receive the answer to all his problem but was unable to understand it with his mere, mortal ears? Or was he being laughed at?

"I don't quite bother much with beliefs if I'm honest," He frowned "I never needed those answers. I only needed to look after my people... That shouldn't change, right?" He said, fairly confident in that answer. His father had been so against the Old Religion that Arthur had never considered what it would mean now that he had freed it. He supposed he could stop calling Arvutania and the rest false-gods... But there was also no way he was going to pray at their temples considering they were all kind of jerks. Might explain a thing or two about Merlin. The frog croaked again. "Why does Lancelot find conversations with you so enlightening?" He asked.

"My lord?"

Arthur turned to find Lancelot himself standing behind him with an armful of...Was that...Powder? He didn't want to know.

"Lancelot," He greeted and stood up. "I was having a conversation with your friend here. What god is this?" He asked. Lancelot peered around his shoulder to look at the frog.

"That's Gwaine."

"Ah, Gwaine. Wait. *Gwaine?"* Arthur yelped and spun around. The frog croaked again. "Why is Gwaine a frog?!" He demanded loudly and Lancelot sighed.

"Mordred finally had enough of him and turned him into a frog. I'm trying to resolve it before Merlin finds out and throttles Mordred. Hopefully, once all is said and done the two can become friends." He said though there was little hope in his voice. He turned back to stare at Gwaine. He thought to their previous conversation. Huh. He wasn't sure he wanted Gwaine to be walking around knowing Arthur's musings.

"Any chance we could leave him as a frog?" He asked. Lancelot raised his eyebrows before puckering out his lips in consideration.

"...maybe."

"Lancelot, I need you to tell Merlin something." Arthur said as he glanced up at his knight entering the room. Immediately, Lancelot wilted as he closed his eyes in complete and utter exasperation... Which wasn't really fair because Arthur felt like *he* held the title of being completely and utterly exasperated.

"He's right outside the door. What argument are you having *now?"* He asked, pulling up a chair. Arthur smiled and picked up his quill to scribble something down and slide it across the desk to him. Lancelot picked it up before going completely still. Arthur waited.

"Well?" He asked impatiently "Can you do that?"

Lancelot glanced up, a soft smile touching his lips.

"I...I *can*, but might I suggest a few edits?" He said and Arthur tilted his head. "Maybe...Phrase it as a question?" He said and Arthur wrinkled his nose. That left a little room for his plan to not go as well as he wanted it to, but supposed it was the fair thing to do. At Arthur's nod, Lancelot beamed and got up to walk back to the door. Arthur bit his lip. He tapped his fingers on the desk. He waited. He...Okay, there was nothing else for him to do at this point. Why was Lancelot taking so long? Granted, it had only been maybe thirty seconds, but *still*.

Deciding that approximately forty-five seconds was a good amount of time, he got up to follow Lancelot outside when the door opened again.

"Hi," the knight greeted "I have an answer."

"And?" Arthur said, wringing his hands together.

"And I still am not sure why you two can't do these things in person-"

"We have fun torturing you together. It's our thing now. What did he say?" Arthur waved. Lancelot sniffed a little at that, but it seemed to melt away in place of pure joy.

"Well, he said he *would* marry you," Oh thank God. Arthur was a little worried after adding the question mark on there. "And that, uh... He loves you." He added, looking a little uncomfortable towards the end. Arthur smirked.

"Is he still out there then?" He asked. Lancelot nodded. Right, then. Arthur knew exactly what he had to do. "Wonderful. Please tell him that I am very pleased he has accepted this proposal and that I also love him. Then tell him he should come by later-"

"Nope," Lancelot interrupted, throwing up his hands "You can't keep doing this to me." He said and from outside, he could hear Merlin laugh.

"But you're the Great Emissary, Lancelot! Are you going to *fail* in your duties to your patron goddess of Prophecy?"

"I will *not* be used as a messenger for any dirty talk! It is uncouth and uncomfortable." He was saying, going deep red. Arthur snorted.

"Of course, Lancelot. I'm glad you have standards." He smiled and Lancelot scowled at him. "Hey, on your way out could you tell Merlin I would like to arrange a meeting Arvutania? Just to discuss how well you are in doing in your position." He asked innocently. Lancelot put a hand over his mouth.

"MERLIN! I'm your bloody friend! Get in here and defend me!"

Maybe those false-gods weren't as much of jerks as he thought after all.

Chapter End Notes

In Conclusion: they had to kill Lancelot off bc if he lived he would have solved all the shows problems

Also, don't worry. They eventually turned Gwaine back. Merlin would figure it out eventually.

Not sure what the next one is going to be... I'll update the series summary with the new list when I figure it out so feel free to check there.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!